



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

February 16, 2012

This document is the first of regular updates to be provided to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force on community input received during the bond development process.

This report provides public comments and input received between January 10 and February 13, 2012 from the following sources:

- Public comments provided during community engagement events occurring during the report timeframe
- Emails sent to [bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov](mailto:bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov)
- Voicemails or texts to the Bond Development Hotline (512) 539-0060
- Comments provided online on SpeakUpAustin.org
- Comments provided on the City's facebook page and Twitter account

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

- **Speak Week** – In January 2012, the City set up booths across Austin and solicited public feedback on guiding principles for the Bond Development process. This initiative resulted in 9 Speak Week booth locations and 20 volunteer shifts.
- **Open House** – Citizens were invited to attend an Open House on February 7, 2012 at the Palmer Events Center to learn more about the bond development process, the guiding principles behind it and provide input about community needs and priorities. Approximately 100 people attended this event with about 20 staff members on hand to answer citizens' questions.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES SURVEY RESULTS**

At the Speak Week and Open House events, citizens were asked to rank the importance of Guiding Principles for the City's bond development process. An online survey with the same information was launched on SpeakUp Austin in early February. The SpeakUp online survey will close on February 29<sup>th</sup>.



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

#### February 16, 2012

The results below include results from the Speak Week booths and Open House surveys. Based off a sample set of 237 people, this is the current rankings of the Guiding Principles:

<u>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</u>	<u>AVG. RANK</u>
• Sustainability	2.7
• Infrastructure	2.8
• Mobility	2.9
• Cost-Effectiveness	3.7
• (TIED) Balanced Approach	4.1
• (TIED) New Initiatives	4.1

1 = MOST IMPORTANT ----◇ 6 = LEAST IMPORTANT

These results will be updated after the SpeakUp Austin online survey closes on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### **OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT**

Citizens had an opportunity to provide additional comments for Bond Election Advisory Task Force consideration by completing comment cards at the Speak Week and Open House events, sending an email to [bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov](mailto:bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov), leaving a message or text to the hotline (512) 539-0060, and/or commenting on Speak Up Austin.

The following comments were provided through one or more of those methods between January 10 and February 13, 2012. (Organization of comments provided by staff.)

#### **Bond Development Process comments**

- All guiding principles should be weighted equally.
- Key to not let past projects that have been waiting for funding not be left out of consideration
- “Cost-effectiveness & balance” should not be competing for prioritization with the remaining 4 areas of interest. Any progress made in these areas should always take these issues into consideration with out question
- Development needs to be cost effective
- It would be cost-effective for the City to have a Bond update 4 times a year.
- I think more people would come to these open houses if it had a catchier name then bond development. For example next time lets call it “vote for the future landscape of Austin” or “vote for Austin’s future” or “be a part of the future of Austin” or “make Austin your town”. Also have prizes and give aways to draw people here. Other then that, its great!



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

February 16, 2012

#### Affordable Housing - related comments

- Interest in affordable housing initiatives. Permanent supportive housing
- Unmet needs in poor neighborhoods for parks, rec centers, sidewalk, and public safety. Affordable housing, as was done in the 2006 bonds.
- Affordable home ownership in Austin would be great.
- In addition, support housing.
- More affordable housing for seniors
- Great need for affordable housing as shown by use of past housing bonds. Even more important as Austin gets more costly to live here.
- In the current climate it seems that leveraging other sources of funding must be front and center to keep us in the positive position we find ourselves in today. Investing in affordable housing is a defined strategy that can leverage other private and public funds at the same time promoting sustainability and quality of life for non-wealthy Austinites.
- More assisted-living homes.
- I'm interested in affordable housing for all – at all different income levels, which includes those with no income. I hope the bond package will address the needs of poor families and individuals. I suggest we strategize to house more people than permanent supportive housing. This bond should fund the city's commitment to 350 units, so that we can use them to demonstrate that PSH works. This will encourage the community to provide the additional 1500 units need to house the chronically homeless.
- Invest in a continuum of affordable housing and permanent supportive housing. Focus project attention to neighborhoods in distress – i.e. Rundberg, I35, Lamar area. Ensure consideration of school district data to focus attention on issues that impact successful kids.
- Affordable housing: Deeply affordable, Dispersed, Long-term

#### City Facilities – related comments

- Move fire station number 1

#### Parks & Open Space – related comments

- Please focus on the PARD responsibility to create a transparent and community-based parks, pool, and rec center master plan. Please consider a way to fund infrastructure maintenance permanently for neighborhood pools. Keep neighborhood pools open permanently funded!
- Trees! Trees are an important component of infrastructure for shade, holding soil, absorbing pollution, and aesthetics. Should have a permanent capital fund around 10-20 million for trees as capital assets.



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

February 16, 2012

- Any park bonds should not include funding for the completion town lake park. All construction funds for t.l.p should come from the voter approved rental car tax only. No money for using parkland for a private aquatic center on town lake.
- We must buy all the land that we can right now to protect our Edwards aquifer before it is to late.
- Buy more barton springs watershed land. Reduce plumbing of the barton springs Edwards aquifer, especially during low drought conditions. Save barton springs before it is to late
- Park improvements
- More park improvements
- Please save so we can repair Bartloemu park and other East side parks.
- Last week the Austin business journal printed a story about the YMCA Aquatic Center proposal. I oppose this proposal. Don't use parkland and green space for this. Also the proposed 35 million bond request is excessive. Other priorities should be funded instead of a YMCA aquatic center.
- We need generous sized bonds for more preservation for lands in sensitive areas. Land is affordable and the price is right. Sufficient time should be allocated at bond task force meeting to hear from the organization in town that have land availability information.
- The election should contain generous bonding for the purchase of land for water and species preservation. There are a number of sites available in the aquifer contributing and recharge zones and land prices at the moment are reasonable, The most efficient way to approach this is, I think, to block out some time at one of your meetings to cover the subject. A number of organizations are active in this type of land acquisition and you could hear from all of them at once.

#### Transportation/Mobility - related comments

- Resolution in favor of 43rd & Duval Streets Intersection and Safety Improvements: The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association resolves that the Hyde Park Plaza project indicating reverse angle parking on Duval Street, relocation of public sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks on Duval and E. 43rd Streets, outdoor seating areas, bicycles lanes and parking, and alignment of parking lot driveways on E. 43rd has our support. We request that the City of Austin seek funding for this project as soon as possible to improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists in this heavily traveled local intersection and to foster outdoor seating and community use.
- East 6th street great street as revised in downtown plan/mobility and rail
- Would love to see light rail or some public transit- like Portland Oregon
- Sidewalks both sides of every street



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

February 16, 2012

- Please include in the Great Streets program 5<sup>th</sup> street. To improve 5<sup>th</sup> street from republic square to Plaza Saltillo. Rename as the Mexican American Heritage Corridor to pay tribute to the history and contributions of the Spanish, Mexican, Mexican American, Tejano, and Latino contributions in downtown Austin.
- Better, safer, well maintained bike lanes please. (potholes, better bike lane segregation). Better public transport
- Light rail
- I would like to see a designated bike route be implemented. I think it is dangerous not only for cyclists but also drivers to have to share the major roads such as Lamar, Guadalupe etc. I would like to see the addition of either designated bike lanes or restrict them to side roads that run parallel but are less congested and designed for lower speeds. There is no way a cyclist can physically maintain a speed of 40 mph as posted. Sharing the road is a bad idea when cyclists become a hindrance to safe traffic flow because they are unable to maintain the posted speed. We need to either provide them lanes or find somewhere else for them to communicate.
- Please consider urban rail
- More pedestrian side walks/infrastructure
- More efficient and affordable transportation for seniors
- Need more transportation options including rail. Congestion is Austin's number 1 issue.
- High capacity transit should be number 1 priority and should be an independent bond issue. I will be more likely to support bond if it includes: significant % of capital funding from TIF or other non-bond sources. Clear information on how operating/maintenance will be funded. Long-term plan for Austin wide transit system. For example; where are east/west transit corridors to complement north/south lanes. Anderson, Rutland, Parmer, William cannon, etc. are all potential candidates.
- Support urban mobility generally but rail should be postponed until roads, sidewalks, commuter rail and bike infrastructure is brought up to highest possible level; then invest in rail. I am not against rail (urban) but other modes should have priority right now.
- Austin has long neglected its roads and bridges. Completing the existing road network and augmenting it for added capacity is a must. More recently Austin had determined its path forward (continued roadway neglect, light rail/downtown rail) and worked to force it on the public sidewalks, bicycle projects etc. done under the guise of a transportation bond. Light rail being voted down then repackaged funds preserved for downtown rail with out making it clear shouldn't happen. This bond should be transparent in what it does including cost and ridership data. Then let



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

February 16, 2012

the voters decide

- Bike lanes especially on east riverside
- Fund projects that will revitalize central Austin neighborhoods. Light rail benefits primarily suburbs. For mobility projects fund alternative transport like bicycle paths and bus loops in central Austin. Develop more green belts in floodplains where no development can occur.
- Do not hinder traffic flow on west 5<sup>th</sup> into town. This is a chokepoint in the ring of congestion. Making it a “walk able” street will further impede traffic and possibly negate the positive effects of managed lane on Mopac.
- Please dedicate no less than \$20 million for comprehensive infrastructure & streetscape improvements for E 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Please run urban rail along Manor from Mueller not Red River. Find increased open space/parkland/dedicated environmental easements to protect the Blanco river, recently proven to be a major contributor to Barton Springs during drought.
- Use the COA Diesel Construction Equipment Emission Toolkit to reduce air pollution from CIP and Bond projects. Continue prioritizing non-vehicular mobility options.
- Make buses cheaper. Abandon all projects to do with rail. Do not initiate new rail projects
- Conduit installation in right of way to encourage broadband deployment and minimize street digs/curb cuts. Sidewalk and bike facilities all the way up Burnet. Anderson Trail
- I would like to see much more attention to North Lamar & North Burnet. This area has seen very little funding in the past. These corridors are in need of bike lanes, sidewalks, medians, crosswalks, and stormwater infrastructure upgrades. I would also like to see Little Walnut Creek and its tributary turned into a vibrant train system.
- Because the weather and driving conditions on our roads and bridges seem to need to be repaired every year! I know we as a city can do better with new technologies in road map planning.
- Sidewalks important, curb cuts too, not just rail, but more buses and parking, too!

#### Other comments

- Sustainable alternatives to conventional energy, as well as increased focus in recycling. Composting, and using city green spaces for urban food production.
- I’m really excited about funding city infrastructure and collaborative projects like the waller creek project.



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**February 16, 2012**

- Very concerned that we are pricing people out of this great city with so many new initiatives. 1 in 5 people in Travis County live in poverty. How can we make sure everyone in Austin has a good quality of life.
- My family moved to Austin 3 years ago because it was almost the total package: green, vibrant, diverse enough, lots of culture, friendly (relatively speaking, growing, maintained and professional (demographics)). Many of these 6 focus areas embody the reasons we chose to become Austinites. To continue to attract eager residents and businesses. I caution a balanced enough approach. It provides something for a diverse population, economic base and culture.
- Support the Austin Planetarium which will: Support and enhance science education in Austin. Be built to high sustainability standards. Be funded through private sector, state and municipal bond proceeds. Enhance the dense urban core with increased and diverse housing options. Educate the general public on science of astronomy, general science and sustainability.
- Support the Austin Planetarium which will: Support and enhance science education. Provide matching and/or offsetting city bond funding. Be built sustainable. Educate general public on sustainability. Enhance the dense urban core by combining it with housing. Increases diverse housing in downtown corridor.